

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented marketplace for providing one or more financial transaction services to participants in connection with commercial transactions involving the participants, comprising:

a database containing:

registration information for one or more types of transactions available to participants through the marketplace;

participation criteria for each participant specifying one or more types of transactions in which the participant is willing to participate in association with the marketplace, each participant being pre-qualified to enter into the one or more types of transactions specified in the participation criteria for the participant; and

one or more processes each operable to provide an associated financial transaction service for one or more participants in connection with ongoing transactions involving the participants;

the marketplace operable to:

initiate a selected process in response to a specified event associated with an ongoing transaction, according to the registration information and participation criteria, to provide a corresponding financial transaction service to at least one participant involved in the ongoing transaction; and

monitor activities of the at least one participant in the ongoing transaction to assess whether the participant should continue to be pre-qualified to participate in transactions of the same type as the ongoing transaction.

2. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 1, wherein at least some of the registration information comprises a time limit for a transaction or one or more aspects thereof.

3. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 1, wherein at least some of the registration information comprises a payment point, the marketplace operable to generate payment instructions for communication to a participant in response to a transaction reaching the payment point.

4. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 1, wherein at least some of the participation criteria is selected from the group consisting of item type information, value information, and delivery information.

5. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 1, wherein the participation criteria for at least one participant comprise default criteria specifying all types of transactions.

6. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 1, wherein the initiated process comprises at least one associated person to assist in providing the corresponding service.

7. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 1, wherein the specified event comprises the initiation of the associated commercial transaction.

8. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 1, wherein the initiated process is operable to initiate a transfer of funds on behalf of the participant.

9. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 8, wherein the transfer of funds is made by a financial agent of the participant to a financial agent of a second participant through the marketplace.

10. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 8, wherein the initiated process is operable to generate information for communication to one or more enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems associated with the participant.

11. (Original) The marketplace of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the processes is a participant qualification process operable to determine the acceptability of the participant and of one or more financial agents:

from which the participant may select; and

from or to which funds may be transferred on behalf of the participant.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method operating on one or more computers for providing one or more financial transaction services to participants in connection with commercial transactions involving the participants, comprising:

storing registration information for one or more types of transactions available to participants through a computer-implemented marketplace

storing participation criteria for each participant which specifies one or more types of transactions in which the participant is willing to participate in association with the marketplace, each participant being pre-qualified to enter into the one or more types of transactions specified in the participation criteria for the participant;

providing one or more processes each operable to provide an associated financial transaction service for one or more participants in connection with ongoing transactions involving the participants; ~~and~~

using the marketplace to initiate a selected process in response to a specified event associated with an ongoing transaction, according to the registration information and participation criteria, to provide a corresponding financial transaction service to at least one participant involved in the ongoing transaction; and

monitoring activities of the at least one participant in the ongoing transaction to assess whether the participant should continue to be pre-qualified to participate in transactions of the same type as the ongoing transaction.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein at least some registration information comprises a time limit for a transaction or one or more aspects thereof.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein:
at least some registration information comprises a payment point; and
the marketplace further generates payment instructions for communication to a participant in response to a transaction reaching the payment point.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein at least some of the participation criteria is selected from the group consisting of item type information, value information, and delivery information.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the participation criteria for at least one participant comprise default criteria specifying all types of transactions.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the initiated process comprises at least one associated person to assist in providing the corresponding service.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the specified event comprises initiation of the associated commercial transaction.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the initiated process initiates a transfer of funds on behalf of the participant.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 20, wherein a financial agent associated with the participant transfers the funds to a financial agent associated with a second participant through the marketplace.

22. (Original) The method of Claim 20, wherein the initiated process further generates information for communication to at least one enterprise resource planning (ERP) system associated with the participant.

23. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein at least one process is a participant qualification process that determines the acceptability of the participant and of one or more financial agents:

from which the participant may select; and

from or to which funds may be transferred on behalf of the participant.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A system operating on one or more computers for providing one or more financial transaction services to participants in connection with commercial transactions involving the participants, comprising:

means for storing registration information for one or more types of transactions available to participants through a computer-implemented marketplace

means for storing participation criteria for each participant which specifies one or more types of transactions in which the participant is willing to participate in association with the marketplace, each participant being pre-qualified to enter into the one or more types of transactions specified in the participation criteria for the participant;

means for providing one or more processes each operable to provide an associated financial transaction service for one or more participants in connection with ongoing transactions involving the participants; ~~and~~

means for initiating a selected process in response to a specified event associated with an ongoing transaction, according to the registration information and participation criteria, to provide a corresponding financial transaction service to at least one participant involved in the ongoing transaction; and

means for monitoring activities of the at least one participant in the ongoing transaction to assess whether the participant should continue to be pre-qualified to participate in transactions of the same type as the ongoing transaction.

26. (Currently Amended) Software operating at a computer-implemented marketplace for settling a commercial transaction between a buyer and a seller, the software being embodied in a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:

receive an order for at least one item from the buyer, the buyer being associated with stored participation criteria accessible to the marketplace that specifies one or more types of transactions in which the buyer is willing to participate in association with the marketplace, the participation criteria indicating that the buyer is willing to participate in purchase transactions, the buyer being pre-qualified to enter into the one or more types of transactions specified in the participation criteria for the buyer, the order received from the buyer initiating a purchase transaction;

communicate the order to the seller for fulfillment of the order;
receive notification from the seller in response to shipping of the item;
receive notification from the buyer in response to acceptance of the item;
communicate payment instructions to at least one financial agent associated with the buyer;
receive payment from the financial agent associated with the buyer;
communicate the payment to a financial agent associated with the seller;
receive notification from the seller in response to acceptance of the payment; ~~and~~
communicate accounting information reflecting settlement of the transaction; and
monitor activities of the buyer in the purchase transaction to assess whether the buyer should continue to be pre-qualified to participate in purchase transactions.

27. (Original) The software of Claim 26, further operable to communicate the order to a financial agent associated with the buyer or the seller.

28. (Original) The software of Claim 26, wherein the financial agent associated with the buyer is integral to the buyer.

29. (Currently amended) The software of Claim 26, wherein the financial agent associated with the ~~buyer~~ seller is integral to the ~~buyer~~ seller.

30. (Original) The software of Claim 26, further operable to communicate the accounting information to enterprise resource planning (ERP) functionality associated with the buyer or the seller.

31. (Currently Amended) A method, performed at a computer-implemented marketplace, for settling a commercial transaction between a buyer and a seller, comprising:

receiving an order for at least one item from the buyer, the buyer being associated with stored participation criteria accessible to the marketplace that specifies one or more types of transactions in which the buyer is willing to participate in association with the marketplace, the participation criteria indicating that the buyer is willing to participate in purchase transactions, the buyer being pre-qualified to enter into the one or more types of transactions specified in the participation criteria for the buyer, the order received from the buyer initiating a purchase transaction;

communicating the order to the seller for fulfillment of the order;
receiving notification from the seller in response to shipping of the item;
receiving notification from the buyer in response to acceptance of the item;
communicating payment instructions to at least one financial agent associated with the buyer;
receiving payment from the financial agent associated with the buyer;
communicating the payment to a financial agent associated with the seller;
receiving notification from the seller in response to acceptance of the payment; ~~and~~
communicating accounting information reflecting settlement of the transaction; and monitoring activities of the buyer in the purchase transaction to assess whether the buyer should continue to be pre-qualified to participate in purchase transactions.

32. (Original) The method of Claim 31, further comprising communicating the order to a financial agent associated with the buyer or the seller.

33. (Original) The method of Claim 31, wherein the financial agent associated with the buyer is integral to the buyer.

34. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 31, wherein the financial agent associated with the ~~buyer~~ seller is integral to the ~~buyer~~ seller.

35. (Original) The method of Claim 31, further comprising communicating accounting information to enterprise resource planning (ERP) functionality associated with the buyer or the seller.

36. (Currently Amended) A marketplace for settling a commercial transaction between a buyer and a seller, comprising:

means for receiving an order for at least one item from the buyer, the buyer being associated with stored participation criteria accessible to the marketplace that specifies one or more types of transactions in which the buyer is willing to participate in association with the marketplace, the participation criteria indicating that the buyer is willing to participate in purchase transactions, the buyer being pre-qualified to enter into the one or more types of transactions specified in the participation criteria for the buyer, the order received from the buyer initiating a purchase transaction;

means for communicating the order to the seller for fulfillment of the order;

means for receiving notification from the seller in response to shipping of the item;

means for receiving notification from the buyer in response to acceptance of the item;

means for communicating payment instructions to at least one financial agent associated with the buyer;

means for receiving payment from the financial agent associated with the buyer;

means for communicating the payment to a financial agent associated with the seller;

means for receiving notification from the seller in response to acceptance of the payment; ~~and~~

means for communicating accounting information reflecting settlement of the transaction; and

means for monitoring activities of the buyer in the purchase transaction to assess whether the buyer should continue to be pre-qualified to participate in purchase transactions.

37. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein participants are pre-qualified using one or more of:

- one or more qualification ratings;
- one or more qualification rankings; and
- one or more qualification categories.

38. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein the marketplace is further operable to automatically modify the pre-qualification of the at least one participant based on the monitoring of the activities of the participant in the ongoing transaction if such modification is determined to be appropriate.

39. (New) The method of Claim 13, wherein participants are pre-qualified using one or more of:

- one or more qualification ratings;
- one or more qualification rankings; and
- one or more qualification categories.

40. (New) The method of Claim 13, further comprising automatically modifying the pre-qualification of the at least one participant based on the monitoring of the activities of the participant in the ongoing transaction if such modification is determined to be appropriate.

41. (New) The software of Claim 26, wherein the buyer is pre-qualified using one or more of:

- one or more qualification ratings;
- one or more qualification rankings; and
- one or more qualification categories.

42. (New) The software of Claim 26, further operable to automatically modify the pre-qualification of the buyer based on the monitoring of the activities of the buyer in the purchase transaction if such modification is determined to be appropriate.

43. (New) The method of Claim 31, wherein the buyer is pre-qualified using one or more of:

- one or more qualification ratings;
- one or more qualification rankings; and
- one or more qualification categories.

44. (New) The method of Claim 31, further comprising automatically modifying the pre-qualification of the buyer based on the monitoring of the activities of the buyer in the purchase transaction if such modification is determined to be appropriate.